

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

June 16, 2020

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of our constituents, we write to thank you for the Federal Communications Commission's (Commission's) efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. The work the Commission has done, including the Keep Americans Connected pledge and the COVID-19 Telehealth Program, are important steps to address the need for connectivity as people are now required to learn, work, and access healthcare remotely. In addition to these efforts, we urge you to continue the important, ongoing work to close the digital divide through all means available, including by finalizing rules to enable the nationwide use of television white spaces (TVWS).

The COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated the consequences of the remaining digital divide: many Americans in urban, suburban, and rural areas still lack access to a reliable internet connection when they need it most. Even before the pandemic broadband access challenges have put many of our constituents at a disadvantage for education, work, and healthcare. Stay-at-home orders and enforced social distancing intensify both the problems they face and the need for cost-effective broadband delivery models.

The unique characteristics of TVWS spectrum make this technology an important tool for bridging the digital divide. It allows for better coverage with signals traveling further, penetrating trees and mountains better than other spectrum bands. Under your leadership, the FCC has taken significant bipartisan steps toward enabling the nationwide deployment of TVWS, including by unanimously adopting the February 2020 notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM), which makes several proposals that we support. Specifically, we are pleased that the NPRM proposes to allow for more flexibility and uses of TVWS, including rules governing narrowband Internet of Things (IoT) deployments, geofenced mobile platform operations, and enabling broader coverage through increased antenna height and power, with appropriate interference protections.

We have followed the deployment of TVWS pilots across the nation and appreciate that this modality reaches otherwise underserved areas and populations with minimal infrastructure, which makes it especially cost-effective. We fully support the FCC's mission to bridge the digital divide and encourage the Commission to move quickly and adopt final rules based on the NPRM by the end of 2020.

We look forward to working alongside the Commission on bridging the digital divide during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

Sincerely,



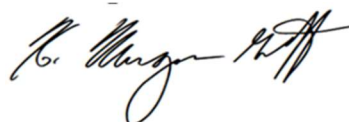
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Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



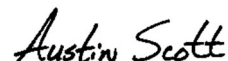
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